



INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(51) International Patent Classification 7 :

C12N 9/64, C07K 14/81

A3

(11) International Publication Number:

WO 00/26348

(43) International Publication Date:

11 May 2000 (11.05.00)

(21) International Application Number: PCT/CA99/01058

(22) International Filing Date: 4 November 1999 (04.11.99)

(30) Priority Data:

2,249,648

4 November 1998 (04.11.98)

CA

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(81) Designated States: AE, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BY, CA, CH, CN, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, EE, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, NO, NZ, PL, PT, RO, RU, SD, SE, SG, SI, SK, SL, TJ, TM, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VN, YU, ZA, ZW, ARIPO patent (GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZW), Eurasian patent (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European patent (AT, BE, CH, CY, DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, SE), OAPI patent (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TO).

Published

With international search report.

(88) Date of publication of the international search report:

23 November 2000 (23.11.00)

(54) Title: MAMMALIAN SUBTILISIN/KEXIN ISOZYME SKI-1: A PROTEIN CONVERTASE WITH A UNIQUE CLEAVAGE SPECIFICITY

Seq. ID: 1
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00001
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 2
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00002
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 3
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00003
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 4
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00004
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 5
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00005
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 6
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00006
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 7
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00007
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 8
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00008
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 9
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00009
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 10
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00010
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 11
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00011
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 12
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00012
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 13
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00013
 Date: 1999-11-04

Seq. ID: 14
 Name: SKI-1
 Accession: U00014
 Date: 1999-11-04

(57) Abstract

Using RT-PCR and degenerate oligonucleotides derived from the active site residues of subtilisin-kexin-like serine proteinases, we have identified a highly conserved and phylogenetically ancestral human, rat and mouse type-I membrane-bound proteinase called subtilisin-kexin-isozyme-1 (SKI-1). Computer data bank searches reveals that human SKI-1 was previously cloned but with no identified function. A SKI-1 processed fragment is secreted in culture media in a soluble form. *In vitro* studies suggest that SKI-1 is a Ca^{2+} -dependent serine proteinase exhibiting a wide pH optimum for cleavage of proBDNF. Peptides mimicking SKI-1 cleavage sites are also disclosed. SKI-1 prosegment has an *ex vivo* inhibitory effect on SKI-1 activity. The prosegment is also processed and secreted in culture media. One of its fragments is found tightly associated with the SKI-1 soluble form. Therapeutic applications for SKI-1 inhibitors are disclosed.